

Chapter 6 Growth Inducing

6.1 Introduction

CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126. 2 [d]) require that an EIR evaluate the growth inducing impacts of a proposed action. A growth inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as an impact that fosters economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly. Direct growth inducement would result, for example, if a project involved the construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result if a project established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., new commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises) or if it would remove obstacles to population growth (e.g., expansion of a waste water treatment plant that could allow more construction in the service area). Under NEPA, an EA must also examine environmental impacts (40 CFR § 1508.9 (b)), including growth inducing effects (40 CFR § 1508.8 (b)).

Growth inducement may constitute an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans provide development patterns and growth policies that guide orderly urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infrastructure, sewer services, and solid waste services. A project that would induce "disorderly" growth (i.e., conflict with the local land use plans) could directly or indirectly cause additional adverse environmental impacts and other public services impacts.

6.2 Setting And Potential Growth Inducing Effects

The project site is located in a rural residential area of El Dorado County nine miles (14.5 km) west of Placerville. The proposed interchange would be constructed for a single purpose - to provide unrestricted access to the Shingle Springs Rancheria. It would not be a through road and would not serve neighboring lands. A unique construction design would prevent connections or access to the south side of Highway 50. Connections would also be precluded by regulation. Off-Rancheria development would not be facilitated by the proposed project. Any future development in the project area or region would continue to be subject to approval by El Dorado County and compliance with any applicable neighborhood covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs).

The project would not induce substantial population growth on the Shingle Springs Rancheria, as the interchange is intended to facilitate an economic development project (i.e., hotel and casino complex). There is no housing associated with the proposed project. There

are also a limited number of Tribal members and developable acres on the existing Rancheria.

Construction of the proposed interchange would allow for the development of a hotel and casino complex evaluated under the *Shingle Springs Rancheria Hotel and Casino Environmental Assessment* (AES, 2001) developed for the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC). The hotel and casino would be situated on land within the Rancheria that is set aside for commercial purposes. The hotel and casino complex would be constructed on 43.9 acres within the Rancheria boundaries. The plan includes the development of a 250-room, 5-level hotel and a 238,500 square foot casino complex. The environmental effects of the hotel/casino complex have been fully addressed and considered in this separate EA. On-Rancheria impacts mitigated to a less-than-significant level within the EA include water resources, groundwater and surface water quality, air quality, biological resources, water supply, law enforcement, fire protection, and noise. The NIGC has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the hotel and casino project.

Indirect growth inducing impacts related to the hotel and casino development consists of job growth and possibly an associated increase in off-Rancheria housing demand. The hotel and casino complex is projected to employ 1,500 employees directly. It is reasonable to assume that some employees will reside in the surrounding communities including Shingle Springs, Placerville, El Dorado Hills, and Folsom. It would be speculative to state exactly where and in what numbers future employees would seek housing. The current residential vacancy rate in El Dorado County is 17.3 percent. Assuming a total of 71,278 housing units within the County, this leaves approximately 12,339 units vacant. However, up to 9,614 of these vacant units have seasonal, recreational or occasional uses (US Census, 2001). This leaves approximately 2,725 units available for renting and/or purchasing.

The Housing Element of the El Dorado County General Plan includes an inventory of land suitable for residential development. The Housing Element identifies a total of 28,199 acres designated as High Density Residential – single-family residential development at densities from one to seven dwelling units per acre. A total of 2,749 acres have been identified as Multi-Family Residential. This designation allows for apartments, condominiums and multi-plexes with densities of seven to 24 dwelling units per acre. Together, high density and multi-family designated vacant lands in El Dorado County could support as many as 263,369 dwelling units (El Dorado County Planning Department, 1996). It should be noted that this figure does not include dwelling units that could be build on acreage with other residential designations including Rural Residential, Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential.

El Dorado Hills and Shingle Springs have the greatest amounts of proposed residential development in the West Slope region of El Dorado County. A total of 13,800 residential dwelling units are either approved, under construction, or completed. These units account for more than half of 23,705 dwelling units that have been approved in the West Slope region of El Dorado County (EPS, 2000).

Clearly, the amount of existing and currently approved residential developments in the West Slope region of El Dorado County would provide an ample amount of residential opportunities to the employees of the hotel and casino complex. Additionally, it can be assumed that the development of any additional housing within El Dorado County would be subject to approval by County land use plans and ordinances. The County would determine the consistency of proposed housing development with the goals and policies of the El Dorado County General Plan. Therefore, the proposed interchange would not likely induce “disorderly” growth within El Dorado County either directly or indirectly. Other impacts on the socioeconomic character of the surrounding area are evaluated in **Section 5.9**. Other indirect impacts of the proposed interchange are addressed in **Section 9**.